

Learning English with CBC Calgary

Weekly newscast

January 16, 2015

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Objectives of the weekly newscast lesson

- to develop listening skills at the CLB 4 level
- to increase vocabulary among learners
- to increase knowledge of news stories
- to provide a self-study tool, as well as, an ESL classroom resource



www.alberta.ca



<http://www.cbc.ca/calgary/learning-english/>

News story #1 Salary Increases for City Council

If you were given a pay raise at work, would you give away that extra money to someone who needed it more than you do? How much money a year do you think people in government should make? This first story is about members of Calgary's city council getting a pay raise this year.

Vocabulary

Before you listen to the first news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily. Match the words with the correct definitions. *Answers are in the appendix.*

Answer	Words or phrases	Definition
	1. pay raise	a) a gift, money, or some other contribution that's been given away
	2. automatic	b) to be given more money by your employer
	3. linked	c) to decline, or say no to something
	4. wage	d) when something is done immediately or routinely
	5. donate	e) a fund, or group of organized people who accept money and help for people in need
	6. charity	f) connected to or with something
	7. donation	g) to give a gift, money, or some other contribution away
	8. refuse	h) money paid to workers by the hour, day or week

Extra definitions to help you understand the reading:

Calgary's city council – people who have been elected to work on local problems that relate to the City of Calgary

Listening Activity: Short Answer

Answer the questions below as you listen to the audio. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. How much more money are the city council members getting this year?
2. What are the raises connected to?
3. Even though the council members can't refuse the raise, they can still get around having to accept it. Explain how this works.
4. How much more money is the Mayor getting?
5. What is the Mayor's yearly salary?
6. How much of his salary does the Mayor give away?
7. Will the Mayor be donating more money this year than he did last year?
8. How much do city council members make as of January 1st this year?

Discussion: If you were to donate your pay raise to a charity, which charity would it be and why? Why are charities important? Have you ever given time or money to a charity?

News story #2 Property Values Doubled?

What would you do if the price of your home doubled in a year? How does that happen? This second story is about a woman who was told that her home is worth a lot more now than it was last year.

Vocabulary

Before you listen to the second news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily. Match the words in the story with the synonyms. *Answers are in the appendix.*

Answer	Words in the story	Synonyms (Related words)
	1. shocked	a) evaluation; value judgment
	2. nearly	b) amazed; stunned; very surprised
	3. assessment	c) apply; ask; petition
	4. realtor	d) odd thing; unusual; rare
	5. comment	e) almost; closely; mostly
	6. anomaly	f) show; reveal; demonstrate
	7. reflect	g) say; state opinion
	8. appeal	h) person who sells homes

Extra definitions to help you understand the reading:

dreaming in technicolour – not being realistic – making things seem bigger or better than they are

city assessor – a person who works for the city whose job it is to assess the value of citizens' property

Now listen to the second news story from the audio file.

Listening activity: Multiple Choice

Choose the best answer to complete sentences. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. A Calgary woman is shocked because her property is valued to be _____ as it was last year	a) half as high b) twice as high
2. When Pat Wallat's assessment arrived in the mail she found _____.	a) her home is now worth \$1.6 million b) 861 thousand dollars
3. Wallat is feeling _____ about her property assessment.	a) shocked and in disbelief b) extremely excited
4. The realtor Wallat spoke with feels that the assessment is _____.	a) wrong b) close to being exactly right
5. Wallat's _____ got the same kind of news about his or her home.	a) realtor b) neighbour
6. According to Carpa, Wallat's home would have sold at _____ last July	a) \$861,000 b) 1.6 million dollars

Discussion Question: The woman in this story should be happy that the value of her house has doubled, but she isn't. Can you explain why that is? Do you understand how property taxes work each year?

News story #3 Diploma Tests Interrupted

What should happen if someone is taking a serious exam and the computer he/she is working on ends up having a problem part way through? This next story is about how students who were writing their grade 12 diplomas were interrupted mid-exam due to computer problems.

Vocabulary

Before you listen to the third news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily. Use one of the vocabulary words below to complete the sentences. *Answers are in the appendix.*

Word	Definition
glitch	A brief, quick interruption or problem with a computer
diploma	A educational certificate stating that someone has completed grade 12
crash	To stop working; to suddenly fail
calculate	To figure out number or score
server	A computer that is connected to other computers on a network that allows the other computers to access programs and files
principal	The head person at a school
waive	To let go and give up on; to not have to

Extra definitions to help you understand the reading:

partial exemption – to become partly free or released from something

social 30 diploma – the grade 12 final exam for social studies

1. The _____ went down and so all of the computers went off the Internet. Because of this _____ in the system, the computers all _____ for about one hour.
2. The _____ of the school is in charge of all of the students and staff there.
3. All grade 12 students have to write their _____ exams at the end of the year.
4. If you get your fees _____, then you don't have to pay for anything.
5. Let me _____ your average of all the tests you've taken to see what your overall score is.

Listening Activity: True/False

Decide whether the statements below are **true (T)** or **false (F)**. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. ____ The students who had a glitch with their diploma can get that mark exempt (deleted).
2. ____ The server for an Alberta Education portal crashed, affecting thousands of students.
3. ____ All of the students had to write their test with pen and paper after the system crashed.
4. ____ The test usually counts for 15 per cent of the final mark.
5. ____ The students can speak to the school principal about calculating their final marks.
6. ____ The fee will be waived for anyone who wants to rewrite any of his or her diploma tests.
7. ____ The Social 30 diplomas written on Wednesday using the computer program went well.

Activity: Retell the story you just heard with your partner. Think about who is involved in the story and what the main events are.

Language Focus: Modal Verbs

Here are the modals in English:

can	could	should	might	will	would	must	may
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I eat breakfast.	General declaration of fact. Eating breakfast everyday is something I usually do.
I can eat breakfast.	Expresses ability. I can eat breakfast daily if I want to.
I might/may eat breakfast.	Expresses possibility, but not certainty. Maybe I will eat; maybe I won't.
I will eat breakfast.	Expresses future plans. I plan to do it at some later time.
I should eat breakfast.	Expresses slight obligation or suggestion. It is required, and I expect to do it.
I could eat breakfast.	Expresses possibility. If I have the desire or the time, I might eat breakfast.
I would eat breakfast.	(In this case), expresses reservation. If I had the time, desire, food (but I don't). This is usually used with the conditional (If clause) to express possibility.
I must eat breakfast.	Expresses strong obligation. I am required and have to do it.

Rules for modals:

1. Modals are always followed by the base form of the verb – e.g I will drive you there. (Right!)
2. They are never followed by a conjugated verb – e.g. I could ate breakfast. (Wrong!)
3. They are never followed by an infinitive – e.g. I would to drink some water. (Wrong!)
4. Modals never follow modals – e.g. I might can see you later. (Wrong!)

Look at the examples taken from the news stories this week:

- a) find the **modal**
- b) find the **mistakes**
- c) **explain** what each modal means for each example.

Answers are in the appendix.

1. Council members cannot refused the raise but in the past, some have donated it to charity.
2. I asked him, “do you think you could to get 1.6 million for our house?”
3. But Nelson Carpa says these homes are likely an anomaly and the value should reflecting what the house would have sold for last July.
4. Alberta Education says students who experienced a glitch with the Grade 12 English diploma exam Tuesday can may ask for a partial exemption for the mark.
5. Alberta Education says students can to speak to the school principal to calculate their mark based on their final course work and the Part B – or comprehension -- part of the exam.

Transcripts of Weekly news stories

	JANUARY 16 TH WEEKLY NEWS STORIES	TIME
Introduction	Hi, this is Rosa Marchitelli . You're listening to Learning English with CBC for the week of January 16 th .	0:00
Story 1	Members of Calgary city council are getting a pay raise of 3.8 per cent this year. The raises are automatic and they're linked to the average wage increase for Alberta workers last year. Council members cannot refuse the raise but in the past, have donated it to charity. For Mayor Naheed Nenshi, it's a salary increase of about 8-thousand dollars; making his annual salary more than 216 thousand dollars. Nenshi says he donates 10 per cent of his salary to charity, so as it goes up, so do his donations. "I used to turn back the increases and a few years ago, I went to a point where I just donate a set percentage of my salary to charity," he said. As of January 1st, members of city council now make just over 115-thousand dollars a year.	0:07
Story 2	A Calgary woman is shocked; her property assessment nearly doubled this year. When Pat Wallat 's assessment arrived in the mail, she found it had gone from 861 thousand last year, to one point six million this year. Wallat says the assessment isn't fair "no, I find it quite unbelievable. I talked to our realtor and he said... I asked him, do you think you could get 1.6 million for our house? He said 'No!' He just, he laughed. He said 'they're dreaming in technicolour'." One of Wallat's neighbours' assessments also nearly doubled. The city assessor doesn't want to comment on specific cases, but Nelson Carpa says these homes are likely an anomaly and the value should reflect what the house would have sold for last July. Property owners have until March 6th to appeal.	1:11
Story 3	Alberta Education says students who experienced a glitch with the Grade 12 English diploma exam Tuesday can ask for a partial exemption for the mark. The server for an Alberta Education portal crashed, affecting about eight thousand students. Some had to find other ways to write the test, either on a secure school computer, or with pen and paper. The test usually counts for 50 per cent of the final mark. Alberta Education says students can speak to the school principal to calculate their mark based on their final course work and the Part B, or comprehension, part of the exam. The fee will be waived for anyone who wants to rewrite the English test. It says Wednesday's Social 30 diploma test, using the government program, went smoothly.	2:18

Answer keys

News story 1

Vocabulary:

Words or phrases	Answer	Definition
1. pay raise	b	a) a gift, money, or some other contribution that's been given away
2. automatic	d	b) to be given more money by your employer
3. linked	f	c) to decline, or say no to something
4. wage	h	d) when something is done immediately or routinely
5. donate	g	e) a fund, or group of organized people who accept money and help for people in need
6. charity	e	f) connected to or with something
7. donation	a	g) to give a gift, money, or some other contribution away
8. refuse	c	h) money paid to workers by the hour, day or week

Listening:

- How much more money are the city council members getting this year? **3.8%**
- What are the raises connected to? **The average wage increase for Alberta workers last year.**
- Even though the council members can't refuse the raise, they can still get around having to accept it. Explain how this works. **They can donate the extra money to charity.**
- How much more money is the mayor getting? **\$8,000 more a year**
- What is the mayor's yearly salary? **Over \$216,000/year**
- How much of his salary does the mayor give away? **10%**
- Will the mayor be donating more money this year than he did last year? **Yes, as his pay goes up, so do his donations.**
- How much do city council members make as of January 1st this year? **\$115,000**

News story 2

Vocabulary:

Answer	Words in the story	Synonyms (Related words)
b	1. shocked	a) evaluation; value judgment
e	2. nearly	b) amazed; stunned; very surprised
a	3. assessment	c) apply; ask; petition
h	4. realtor	d) odd thing; unusual; rare
g	5. comment	e) almost; closely; mostly

d	6. anomaly	f) show; reveal; demonstrate
f	7. reflect	g) say; state opinion
c	8. appeal	h) person who sells homes

Listening:

1. A Calgary woman is shocked because her property is valued to be _____ as it was last year	a) half as high b) twice as high
2. When Pat Wallat `s assessment arrived in the mail she found _____.	a) her home is now worth \$1.6 million b) 861 thousand dollars
3. Wallat is feeling _____ about her property assessment.	a) in shock and disbelief b) extremely excited
4. The realtor Wallat spoke with feels that the assessment is _____.	a) wrong b) close to being exactly right
5. Wallat's _____ got the same kind of news about his or her home.	a) realtor b) neighbour
6. According to Carpa, Wallat's home would have sold at _____ last July	a) \$861,000 b) 1.6 million dollars

News story 3

Vocabulary:

1. The **server** went down and so all of the computers went off the Internet. Because of this **glitch** in the system, the computers all **crashed** for about one hour.
2. The **principal** of the school is in charge of all of the students and staff there.
3. All grade 12 students have to write their **diploma** exams at the end of the year.
4. If you get your fees **waived**, then you don't have to pay for anything.
5. Let me **calculate** your average of all the tests you've taken to see what your overall score is.

Listening:

1. F The students who had a glitch with their diploma can get that mark exempt.
2. T The server for an Alberta Education portal crashed, affecting thousands of students.
3. F All of the students had to write their test with pen and paper after the system crashed.
4. F The test usually counts for 15 per cent of the final mark.
5. T The students can speak to the school principal about calculating their final marks.
6. F The fee will be waived for anyone who wants to rewrite any of his or her diploma tests.
7. T The Social 30 diplomas written on Wednesday using the computer program went well.

Language focus:

1. Council members **cannot refused** the raise but in the past, some have donated it to charity.

Answer: Council members **cannot refuse** the raise but in the past, some have donated it to charity

Explanation- The council members are not able to refuse the raise, as in the have to accept more money.

2. I asked him, “do you think you **could to get** 1.6 million for our house?”

Answer: I asked him, “do you think you **could get** 1.6 million for our house?”

Explanation- She asked him if it would be possible to get 1.6 million for her house.

3. But Nelson Carpa says these homes are likely an anomaly and the value **should reflecting** what the house would have sold for last July.

Answer: But Nelson Carpa says these homes are likely an anomaly and the value **should reflect** what the house would have sold for last July.

Explanation- The value is likely to reflect what the house would have sold for last July.

4. Alberta Education says students who experienced a glitch with the Grade 12 English diploma exam Tuesday **can may ask** for a partial exemption for the mark.

Answer: Alberta Education says students who experienced a glitch with the Grade 12 English diploma exam Tuesday **can ask** for a partial exemption for the mark.

Explanation – These students are given permission to (allowed to) ask for partial exemption.

5. Alberta Education says students **can to speak** to the school principal to calculate their mark based on their final course work and the Part B – or comprehension -- part of the exam.

Answer: Alberta Education says students **can speak** to the school principal to calculate their mark based on their final course work and the Part B – or comprehension -- part of the exam.

Explanation – Students are able to speak to the school principal to change their mark, if they want to.